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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 3339

FOR ARA/CAR WARNE AND A/ISO DEPUTY ASS'T SECRETARY FRANCIS

E.O.12065: GDS 5/6/86 (LAWRENCE L) OR-AMB
TAGS: PINT, EQUIP, JM
SUBJECT: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR JAMAICA ELECTIONS

REF: KINGSTON 3289

1. C-ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: JAMAICA'S ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS REQUESTED USG ASSISTANCE IN THE COMPUTER PHASE OF THEIR ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTION. SUCH ASSISTANCE COULD SHORTEN THE RUN-UP PHASE TO THE ELECTION BY SEVERAL WEEKS. THE COMMITTE HAS MADE IT PLAIN THAT THIS IS A BIPARTISAN REQUEST, MADE WITH THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE REQUEST SEEMS REASONABLE AND FEASIBLE, AND I STRONGLY SUPPORT A POSITIVE RESPONSE. END SUMMARY.

3. THE ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE VISITED ME MAY 5 AS PRESAGED IN THE REFTEL. THE GROUP CONSISTED OF MS. SHIRLEY MILLER (REPRESENTING THE CHAIRMAN WHO IS OFF THE ISLAND), DR. O.K. MELHADO (REPRESENTING THE GOVERNING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY, PNP) AND LAWYER ABE DABDOUB (REPRESENTING THE JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY , JLP) THEY TOLD ME THAT THEY WERE WOKRING HARD TO GET ALL THE MACHINERY READY FOR AN EARLY ELECTIONS, BUT TWO PHASES OF THE OPERATION COULD NEED OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IF THE ELECTION MACHINERY IS TO BE READY IN ANY REASONABLE TIME.

4. THE FIRST REQUEST IS FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE KEYPUNCH, (DATA PROCESSING PHASE.
AFTER THE ENUMERATION PHASE IS FINISHED, THERE WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 1-1.2 MILLION INDIVIDUAL DATA SHETS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO TAPE OR DISC. OR PERHAPS CARDS. THE COMMITTEE BELIEVES THAT 50 KEYPUNCH STATIONS WILL BE NECESSARY, AND THAT THE BEST MACHINE FOR THE JOB IS THE IBM 3742 (IF EACH MACHINE HAS DUAL STATIONS, 25 MACHINES WILL BE NECESSARY) THE COMMITTEE IS LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING USAGE OF SUFFICIENT MACHINES LOCALLY, AND WILL INFORM US BY MAY 9 IF THAT IS FEASIBLE, BUT IT WAS APPARENT THAY WERE NOT SANGUINE OF SUFFICIENT LOCAL SUPPLY. THEY DID STATE THAT THERE WERE ENOUGH QUALIFIED KEYPUNCH OPERATORS IN JAMAICA TO MAN 50 STATIONS ON A TWO SHIFT BASIS. IF SUFFICIENT LOCAL SUPPLY OF MACHINES IS NOT AVAILABLE, THEN THE COMMITTEE WILL ASK THE USG TO EXCERCISE ITS GOOD OFFICES TO ATTEMPT TO HAVE THE MACHINES SENT IN BY AIR FREIGHT FROM THE U.S. ON A 90 DAY GATE-TO-GATE LEASE BY JUNE 1 IN ORDER TO BE OPERATIONAL BY JUNE 9. TECHNICIANS WOULD
BE NEEDED TO SET UP THE MACHINES. ACCORDING
TO THE COMMITTEE, THE LOCAL IBM OFFICE COULD NOT GET THE MACHINES HERE IN LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS--ERGO, THE REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE (IF NECESSARY) THE GOJ IS PREPARED TO PAY FOR THIS OPERATION, HOPEFULLY ARRANGING TO PAY THE LOCAL IBM OFFICE IN JAMAICAN DOLLARS (INCIDENTIALLY, FALL BANCK ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE TO TAKE THE TAPES TO THE U.S. FOR THE KEYPUNCH PHASE, BUT THE COMMITTEE HOPES THIS WILL NOT BE NECESSARY

5. THE SECOND REQUEST, HOWEVER THE KEYPUNCH PHASE IS ARRANGED, IS FOR ASSISTANCE IN PRINTING UP ELECTORAL LISTS FROM THE COMPUTER TAPES OR DISCS. THE COMMITTEE FIGURES THAT USING THE ONLY LOCAL MEANS AVAILABLE, MULTILITH STENCILS, WOULD TAKE ABOUT EIGHT WEEKS. IF THE TAPES ARE TAKEN TO THE U.S. AND USED WITH HIGH SPEED COMPUTER PRINTOUTS, IT COULD BE DONE IN A FEW DAYS ACCORDING TO THE COMMITTEE. AGAIN THE COMMITTEE STATES THAT THE GOJ WILL PAY FOR THIS OPERATION, BUT NEEDS USG ASSISTANCE TO SPEED UP THE ARRANGEMENTS. THE MOST OPTIMISTIC ESTIMATE
OF THE DATE WHEN THE MATERIAL WOULD BE READY FOR PRINTOUT WOULD BE APPROXIMATELY LATE JULY.

6. THE COMMITTEE INTENDS TO MAKE A SIMILAR APPROACH TO THE BRITISH AND CANADIAN H COMMISSIONS, BUT IT IS APPARENT THAT MOST OF THEIR HOPES CENTER ON THE U.S. BECAUSE OF PROXIMITY AND EASE OF TECHNICAL COMPATIBILITY AND CAPACITY. ALSO, THE COMMITTE STRESSED THAT THEIR APPROACH IS BIPARTISAN AND MADE WITH THE FULL APPROVAL OF THE GOJ.

7. COMMENT: OUT POLICY CENTERS ON ENCOURAGIN AS EARLY AND AS FAIR AN ELECTION AS POSSIBLE. THE LONGER THE DELAY, THE MORE LIKELY THAT INCREASING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTUES AND INCUREASING VIOLENCE COULD INTERFERE WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. THEREFORE, I COULD NOT IMAGINE A MORE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT OUR POLICY AND STRONGLY RECOMMEND A QUICK, POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S REQUEST. I HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY WALLY FRANCIS BY PHONE, AND IT SEEMS THAT IN INITIAL THINKING THE REQUEST COULD BE IMPLEMENTED, THOUGH PERHAPS WITH SOME DIFICULTY IN THE FIRST PHASE.
THE ELECTORAL COMMITTEE HAS
HIRED A FULL-TIME COMPUTER EXPERT, MR. D.A. DUNLEY, WHO HA IMPRESSIVE CREDENTIALS, AND I AM ALSO AWARE OF THE OFFER OF LEADING JAMAICAN BUSINESSMEN AND BANKERS TO MAKE THEIR EXPERTS. TECHNICIANS AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN THIS EFFORT.
LAWRENCE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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